REMARKS

Claims 1-32 are pending. Claims 1-3, 8, 10, 17-19, 24 and 26 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 5,917,913 ("Wang") further in view of US Patent No. 6,233,565 ("Lewis") and further in view of US Patent No. 5,948,103 ("Fukuzaki"). Claims 4-7, 9, 11, 13, 20-23, 25, 27 and 29 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wang, Lewis and Fukuzaki and further in view of "User's Guide: Microsoft Word". Claims 12, 14, 28 and 30 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wang, Lewis, Fukuzaki and further in view of US Patent No. 6,751,780 ("Neff"). Claims 15, 16, 31 and 32 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wang, Lewis, Fukuzaki and further in view of US Patent No. 6,654,009 ("Rubin"). The applicant respectfully traverses the rejections and requests reconsideration in view of the amendments and remarks below.

I.   Interview Summary

The applicant thanks the Examiner and Examiner Hong for participating in a telephone interview with the applicant's representative, Brenda Leeds Binder, on October 24, 2005. Claim 1 was discussed in the context of the Wang, Lewis and Fukuzaki references. A possible amendment to claim 1, similar to the amendment included herein, was discussed. The Examiner indicated that such an amendment would likely require a new search, and as such is being filed with a Request for Continued Examination.

II.   103 Rejections

Claims 1-16

Claim 1, as amended, recites a method for signing an electronic document, more particularly as set forth below. The amendments are marked for the Examiner's ease of reference.

1.   (Currently Amended) A method for signing an electronic document, the method
comprising:

establishing an electronic signature appearance for an electronic signature, an
electronic signature appearance comprising a visual manifestation of a signer's~~the~~
~~electronic~~ signature on the electronic document;

determining a bounding region on the electronic document for the display of the
electronic signature appearance;

at the time of signing an electronic document, previewing the electronic signature
appearance in the bounding region, where the electronic signature appearance can be
edited based on a user input after previewing the electronic signature appearance and
before signing the electronic document; and

signing the electronic document with an electronic signature, the electronic
signature appearance included in the electronic document ~~associated with the electronic~~
~~signature appearance~~.

The Examiner asserts that Lewis discloses the third limitation of "at the time of signing

an electronic document, previewing the electronic signature appearance in the bounding region",

referring to Lewis at Col. 19, line 50 – Col. 20, line 10. In the excerpt referred to by the

Examiner, Lewis is describing a system where a user can input mailing addresses and other

information into a client computer, connect to a server, and print postage onto an envelope, label

or series of envelopes and labels. A user can preview a single envelope or label, and a return

address, mailing address and a bitmap of a sample indicium (*e.g.*, 2-D barcode and postage

amount, see Figs. 4A and 4B) is displayed as it would appear printed (Col. 19, ll. 52-56). The

user can then select to print the envelope or label, and is connected to a web server and a file of

the mailing addresses and other information is sent (Col. 19, ll. 58-63). The file is digitally

signed and the digital signature is verified by a validation server (Col. 19, ll. 58-63). The address

file is used to calculate postage amounts, the contents of the indicium are then hashed into a

message format and the resulting message is digitally signed (Col. 19, line 64 to Col. 20, line

10). The indicium is then encrypted and sent back to the user's computer for formatting and

printing. As each indicium is hashed, the appropriate postage amount is deducted from the

customer's descending register on PSD located on a master server (Col. 20, ll. 11-13).

Lewis' digital signature process is unrelated to the print preview process described,

where a user can print preview an envelope or label. There is no preview of an electronic

signature appearance, where an electronic signature appearance is a visual manifestation of a

signer's signature. What is displayed to the user in the preview is a return address, a mailing address and a bitmap of a sample indicium (*e.g.*, 2-D barcode and postage amount, see Figs. 4A and 4B); there is no preview of an electronic signature appearance.

In the present office action, the Examiner relies on an additional reference, Fukuzaki. Fukuzaki also fails to provide a preview of an electronic signature appearance. Further, neither Wang, Lewis nor Fukuzaki, alone or in combination, disclose previewing the electronic signature appearance, where the electronic signature appearance can be edited based on a user input after previewing the electronic signature appearance and before signing the electronic document. Wang has no electronic signature appearance, where an electronic signature appearance is a visual manifestation of a signer's signature. Lewis discloses a preview feature, but the preview is of mailing addresses and postage indicium on envelopes and is unrelated to an electronic signature appearance. Fukuzaki modifies "figure data" using a checksum calculated from the content of an electronic document to be signed (Col. 10, lines 16-28). Even if the figure data is an electronic signature appearance (which is not conceded), the modification to the figure data is not based on a user input, and a user is not given an opportunity to preview an electronic signature appearance and edit said electronic signature appearance before signing the electronic document.

Additionally, there is no motivation to combine the preview feature of Lewis with either Wang or Fukuzaki. In the method recited in claim 1, a user previews an electronic signature appearance that the user can edit before signing the document; there is a clear purpose for providing the preview of the electronic signature appearance. However, in Wang, firstly there is no electronic signature appearance, and even if one considers the electronic signature data relied on by the Examiner, there is no reason to allow the user to preview said data, as the user has no ability to edit the electronic signature. Similarly in Fukuzaki, the figure data is modified in the electronic signing process, but the user is not given an opportunity to "edit" an "electronic signature appearance", and thus there is no motivation to modify Fukuzaki with the preview feature of Lewis.

Accordingly, none of the references, alone or in combination, disclose the limitations of claim 1, which is in condition for allowance. Claims 2-16 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 17-32

Claim 17 recites a computer program product, tangibly stored on a machine-readable medium, and including instructions operable to cause a programmable processor to perform actions similar to the actions recited in claim 1. Accordingly, claim 17 in allowable over Wang in view of Lewis and Fukuzaki for at least the same reasons as discussed above in reference to claim 1. Claims 18 – 32 depend from claim 17 and are therefore also in condition for allowance.

Additional Cited References

The Examiner has further relied on three additional references in rejecting certain of the dependent claims. However, neither of these references disclose "previewing the electronic signature appearance in the bounding region, where the electronic signature appearance can be edited based on a user input after previewing the electronic signature appearance and before signing the electronic document", as required by independent claims 1 and 17, and therefore do not cure the deficiencies of the Wang, Lewis and Fukuzaki references noted above.

In particular, the "User's Guide: Microsoft Word" reference discloses a dialog box including controls for changing font settings and discloses templates for Word documents. There is no disclosure of previewing an electronic signature appearance.

Neff discloses a user interface method for launching an optimized final scan of a selected region of interest selected from a preview scan of a document (Abstract). There is no disclosure of an electronic signature appearance, previewing an electronic signature appearance or of electronically signing an electronic document.

Rubin discloses a method for arranging entities in a two-dimensional lattice (Abstract). There is no disclosure of an electronic signature appearance, previewing an electronic signature appearance or of electronically signing an electronic document.

The applicant respectfully submits the claims are in condition for allowance, and requests the Examiner allow the claims.

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· No fees are believed due, however, please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____OCt 26|05_____   _____

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